Norton 2020
Seeing the Future Clearly

ON THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE

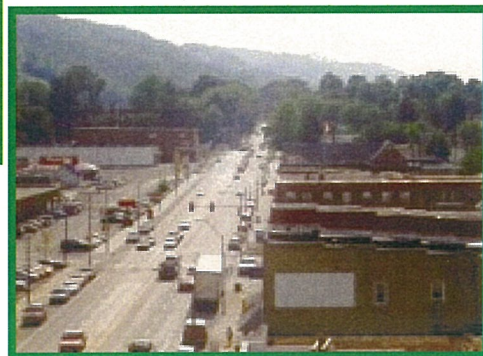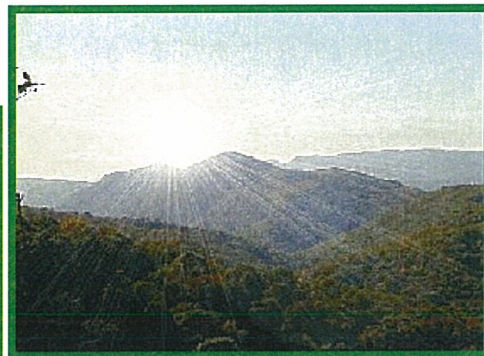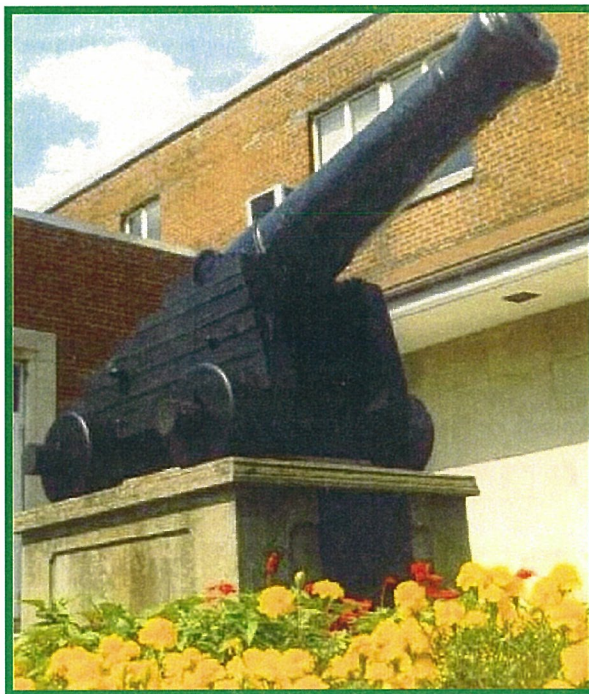CITY OF NORTON VIRGINIA

Comprehensive Plan
City of Norton, Virginia

Prepared by the City of Norton Planning Commission
With the Assistance of MarshWitt Associates PC

Comprehensive Plan
of the
City of Norton, Virginia

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Adopted by the Norton City Council:
April 15, 2003

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Chapter I
Introduction

"A good plan will articulate a community's vision for its future."

This document is the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Norton, Virginia. It was prepared under the direction and guidance of the Norton Planning Commission. Work on the plan was initiated in the Summer of 2001 and was completed in the Spring of 2003.

A comprehensive plan is a long-range planning tool for a community. A good plan evaluates local trends and conditions, articulates a community's vision for its future, and contains community goals, objectives and strategies that help guide decision making and public investment. To be effective and valid, a plan must be based upon the knowledge, values, and aspirations of a community's citizens.

Community involvement was one of the guiding principles governing the preparation of this plan. Over 400 Norton citizens contributed to its development. All contributed their time, ideas and vision for Norton's future. Stakeholder interviews, community surveys, city-wide meetings, and community work sessions were all used as strategies to maximize the citizen participation crucial to the development of this plan.

This plan is an official public document adopted by the Norton City Council on April 15, 2003. The plan can be used as a long-term guide for land use decisions related to growth and development within the city. The plan can also be used as a general guide that outlines public priorities, and directs expenditures for public facilities and programs.

Authority

Authority for local government planning in Virginia is contained in Section 15.2-2223 through 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia. This plan was prepared in accordance with these provisions.

By law, the Plan shall be general in nature. It shall designate the approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown and may indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use.

A plan, with accompanying maps, charts, and descriptive matter, may include, but need not be limited to:

- The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, business, industrial, agricultural, mineral resources, conservation, recreation, public service, flood plain and drainage, and other areas;

- The designation of a system of transportation facilities such as streets, roads, highways, parkways, railways, bridges, viaducts, waterways, airports, ports, terminals, and other like facilities;

- The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings and institutions, hospitals, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;

- The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment;

- The designation of areas for the implementation of reasonable ground water protection measures;

- An official map, a capital improvements program, a subdivision ordinance, a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps, mineral resource district maps and agricultural and forestal district maps, where applicable;

- The location of existing or proposed recycling centers; and

- The designation of areas for the implementation of measures to promote the construction and maintenance of affordable housing, sufficient to meet the current and future needs of residents of all levels of income in the locality while considering the current and future needs of the planning district within which the locality is situated.

Planning Horizon

The year 2020 was chosen as the planning horizon for this document. *Norton's Vision* contained in Chapter IV of the plan is based upon this time horizon.

By law, this comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the Norton Planning Commission at least once every five years. For each of these future plan reviews, Norton's Vision can serve as the basis to evaluate the continued appropriateness of the plans' goals, objectives and strategies, and progress made towards achieving the vision for the community.

"To plan we must know what has gone on in the past and feel what is coming in the future."

Success Factors

In the Summer of 2001, the Norton Planning Commission began the plan update by identifying a number of factors that were key to a successful planning process. The Commission believed that a successful planning process required the following :

- A broad range of community input from different groups and segments of the population

- The participation of a large number of citizens

- The development of a community consensus on planning issues that emerged during the plan update process.

- A regional perspective on issues.

- The production of a document that was readable and understandable.

To achieve these success factors, the Commission undertook a citizen-based planning effort that emphasized involvement of a broad cross-section of Norton's population.

The Planning Process

The plan update process began in the Summer of 2001. The Commission established a general timeframe for the update process (18 months), and chose a year 2020 planning horizon for the document. A "theme" of *Norton 2020 – Seeing the Future Clearly* was chosen to give identity to the process.

This theme emphasized the Commission's interest in developing a plan that contained a vision of Norton's desired future and a roadmap of steps to take to achieve that vision.

Stakeholder Interviews

Community involvement in plan development began early. In August 2001, the Commission identified twenty-six community stakeholders who had extensive knowledge of Norton. Interviews were conducted with each stakeholder. The stakeholders represented a broad cross-section of business, civic, education and government interests. Most of these individuals were actively involved in civic affairs and had knowledge and opinions of current issues.

From these interviews, seven recurrent themes emerged. These themes provided a glimpse of community values, and were useful to the development of an initial understanding of broader community perspectives.

The themes addressed:
- Economic Development
- Education
- Government/Quality of Life
- Housing
- Recreation and Culture
- Technology, and
- Transportation and Infrastructure

These themes were the original basis of the plan's goals, objectives and strategies and helped to structure the content of the citizen values survey, community-wide meeting, and vision focus groups undertaken in the Fall of 2001 and Winter of 2002.

Citizen Values Survey

As a strategy to obtain broad community involvement, a citizen values survey was developed and mailed to 1480 households within the city. Approximately thirty percent of the households receiving the survey responded. Reponses represented approximately 25 percent of the city's population. The survey also served as a general community notification of the comprehensive plan update process and an invitation to a scheduled community wide meeting. *(A complete summary of survey responses in contained in Appendix A)*

The survey contained forty-seven questions and asked residents to offer their opinions on quality of life and public service issues in the community. Respondents ranked the quality of public services, and satisfaction levels in areas such as housing, recreation, education, and economic development.

Population and Economic Analysis

The Center for Public Service at UVA College at Wise prepared a population and economic analysis of Norton. (See Chapter III). This analysis addressed past trends, current conditions, and projections for many population and demographic attributes. This "quantitative look" at Norton provided a strong basis for plan discussions centering on community growth trends and economic viability.

Community-Wide Meeting

A community-wide meeting was held at Burton High School on November 10, 2001. Participants in the meeting reviewed the population and economic analysis, and the results of the citizen values survey. Participants were asked to offer their ideas and perspectives on local issues and future needs. Seven small groups, each focused on a separate "theme", were formed and participant comments were recorded and summarized.
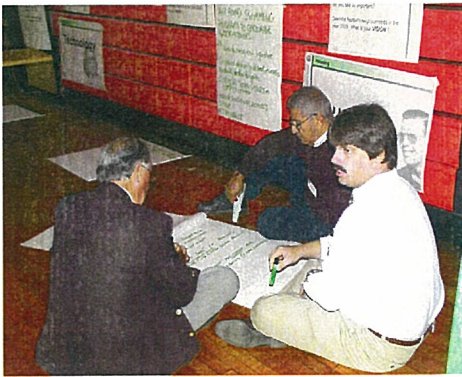
Vision Development

In January and February of 2002, six Vision Teams were convened to discuss and develop a year 2020 Vision for Norton. The team meetings were comprised of members of the general public and approximately forty invited citizens who agreed to share their insights and perspectives on a desired future for Norton. These teams addressed the areas of economic development, education, housing, recreation and culture, technology, and transportation and infrastructure. The Coalfield Progress summarized each meeting and published with weekly op-ed report to the community.

Each team was provided a summary of all information and data collected to date. They began their discussions with a focus on community needs and community values, and concluded their work with the development of a vision for the community

The Norton Planning Commission summarized the vision statements of the six teams, and produced a single 2020 Vision for Norton. The proposed vision was distributed to the vision team participants, and accepted by City Council in April 2002. (See Chapter IV)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

The Norton Planning Commission compiled a draft comprehensive plan in the Summer of 2002. A major component of the plan is a discussion of community issues and opportunities including community goals, objectives, and strategies.

Second Community Meeting

A second community meeting was held on October 10, 2002 at the Hotel Norton. Approximately 25 citizens attended to review the draft plan, including the draft land use maps prepared by the Commission. Citizen comments were recorded on newsprint and considered by the Commission at their meetings in January and February 2003.

Commission and Council Review and Action

The Commission received a final draft plan on February 13, 2003. A public hearing on the plan was scheduled and held on March 13, 2003, at which time the Commission recommended approval of the plan to City Council. City Council held a public hearing on April 15, 2003 and thereafter adopted the comprehensive plan.

"[People] come together in cities in order to live, they remain together in order to live the good life."

Introduction

This section contains an analysis of Norton's demographics, with a focus on population and economic variables. This data was collected and analyzed to provide quantitative perspectives on growth and development trends - past, present and future. Referenced tables can be found in Appendix "B" of this document.

POPULATION ANALYSIS

Current and future population analysis is the foundation for almost all major planning decisions. Current and future demands for community services and facilities, as well as land for residential, commercial and industrial purposes are directly affected by the size, composition, and spatial distribution of a community's population. Population size indicates the basic amounts of land required for the various types of uses. When a time element is introduced and future population trends are projected, these trends become the basis for calculating future community service, facility, and spatial requirements.

Population composition considers age, household size and income levels. These are all indices of the types and extent of needed community services and facilities, and can be a basis for public policy decisions. Population distribution indicates the most functional location for future land uses and community services and facilities. Therefore, population analysis is beneficial as a means of determining the scale, location and timing considerations of future development.

Current Population Size

Between 1940 and 2000, Norton experienced a decrease in population of 102 persons, a net loss of 2.5 percent. The population of Norton in 1940 was 4,006 while the 2000 population numbered 3,904.

While the city's total population as a whole has been relatively constant since 1940, the past twenty years have shown a consistent decline. (See Table 1) Norton's population increased 41 percent between 1940 and 1965 reaching a high of 5,666 persons in September 1965. Almost one-half of this population increase of 1,660 persons was due to the 1952 annexation of developed land east of the City. Since the 1980 Census, the City's population has decreased from 4,757 persons to the current total of 3,904, a loss of 17.9 percent or an annual loss rate of 0.9 percent.

Population Trends - City of Norton

1940-2000
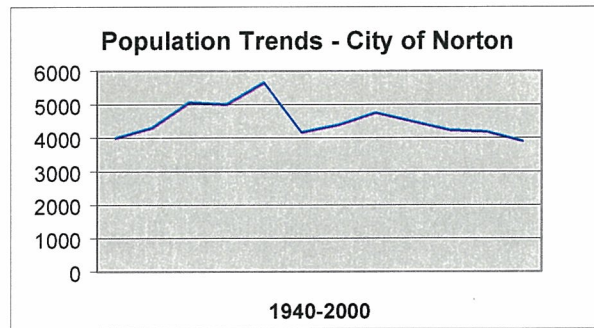
Table 2 compares Norton population changes with other localities in the region. During the 1980 – 2000 period Norton's annual rate of population decline (.9 percent) has been comparable to declines experienced in most other nearby communities. Of the communities compared, only Big Stone Gap and Clintwood had average annual population growth during this period.

Population Projections

Table 3 contains a ten-year population projection for Norton and Wise County prepared by the Virginia Employment Commission. The VEC produces population projections for use by state agencies and the General Assembly, as well as local governments, businesses, and the general public. Although these 1999 estimates are high based upon the actual 2000 census counts, they can be a useful analysis tool over a ten-year horizon These projections show a Norton population increase of approximately 10 percent during this period.

POPULATION COMPOSITION

Age

Tables 4 and 5 provide information on the age composition and distribution of Norton's population. The most dramatic change in Norton's age characteristics from 1990 to 2000 was the significant decrease in persons younger than age 34. Countering this decrease was a slight increase in those ages 34 and older. People age 55 and over accounted for 25.8 percent of the City's population in 2000 as compared to 23.6 percent in 1990. Similarly, those under age 19 represented 24.3 percent of the City's 2000 population while the 1990 total was 29.5 percent. In summary, Norton's population age has become older.

Age Distribution - City of Norton

| | 1990 |
| | 2000 |

Age categories: 0 thru 4, 5 thru 19, 20 thru 34, 35 thru 54, 55 thru 74, 75 and over
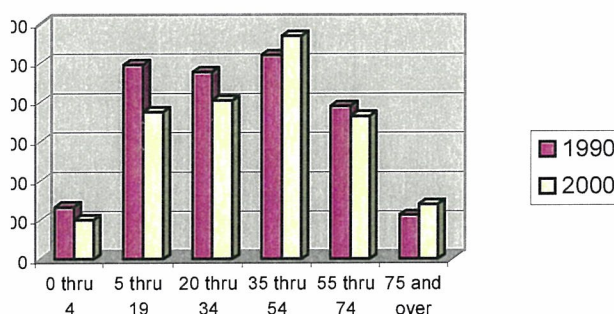
Age Distribution - Wise County

| | 1990 |
| | 2000 |

Age categories: 0 thru 4, 5 thru 19, 20 thru 34, 35 thru 54, 55 thru 74, 75 and over
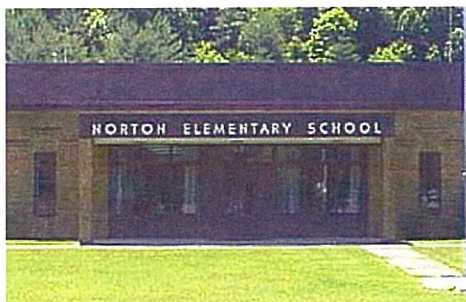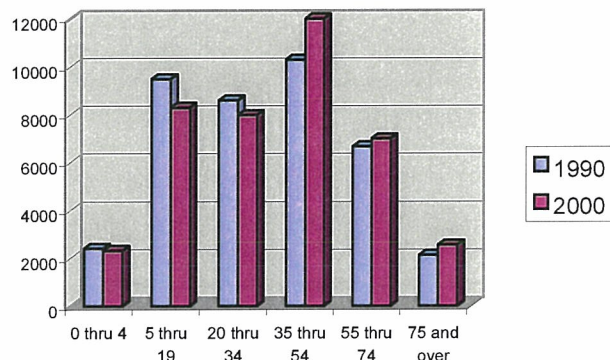
Public School Enrollments

Paralleling the declining census figures for school-age population in the area, school enrollment figures over the past decade have fallen in both Wise County and the City of Norton. Norton's school population declined by approximately 17 percent during the ten-year period ending in 2000. Wise County school population declined by a comparable 16 percent during this period. Tables 6 and 7 show this data, and contain annual totals.

Sex Distribution

Male/Female sex distribution has remained relatively constant in Norton over the past decade. Table 8 shows that in 1990 and 2000, females comprised approximately 55 percent of Norton's population

Birth and Death Rates

Birth and death rates, and migration are three principle variables contributing to population change. Table 9 presents Norton and Wise County birth and death rates during the last half of the 1990's. Norton's birth rate declined, and death rate increased during this short period. In comparison, Wise County experienced increasing birth and death rates during the same period.

Housing

Tables 10-12 present information on Norton's housing characteristics, with a comparison to Wise County.

Table 10 shows that Norton's total housing stock has increased by 66 percent since 1950, with a five percent increase between 1990 and 2000. Wise County's figures are 40 percent and 11 percent respectively.

Table 11 highlights Norton and Wise County residential building permit activity during the 1990's. Single family units comprised the majority of new unit additions in both jurisdictions during this period.

Table 12 offers a comparison of housing stock by age. Housing in Norton is slightly older but comparable to that found in Wise County and Virginia.

Household Size

As shown in Table 13, the average household size in Norton and Wise County has decreased over the past few decades.
This mirrors a national trend of declining household size due to aging populations and decreasing birth rates.

Average Household Size
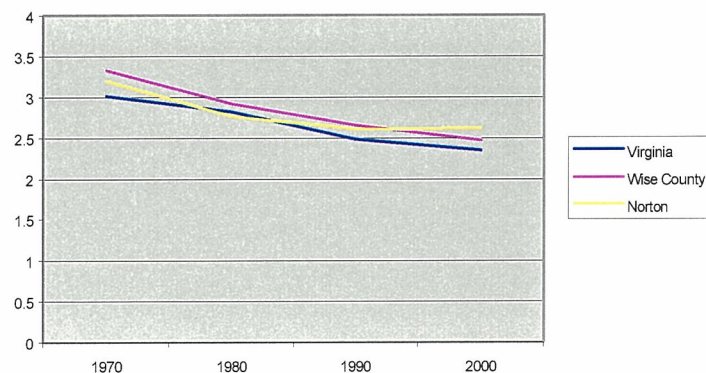
ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

An urban economy is a system of production, distribution and consumption which includes all the productive activity within the urban center and that part of the hinterland which is dependent to a marked degree on facilities and services available in the city.

An understanding of the structure and functioning of Norton's urban economy can be fundamental to all land use planning analyses and policy statements contained within this document. The purpose of this analysis is, therefore, to define, describe, and examine the economic characteristics of Norton's primary trade or economic base area. Completion of this objective will be achieved by reviewing pertinent economic activities, labor force characteristics, income statistics and economic trends.

There are essentially two types of economic activity: the basic activities which produce and distribute goods and services for export to firms and individuals outside of the study area, and non-basic or support activities whose goods and services are purchased and utilized within the boundaries of the local economic area. Basic activities bring in "new money" while support endeavors recycle money already in the community. Basic industry is the cornerstone of a city's economic vitality. Money derived from exportation is necessary for the expansion of existing basic activities, which will in turn promote increased support activities. Increased basic activity encourages the creation of new jobs, enhances the standard of living of those persons already employed, and provides the impetus for increased economic growth.

Table 14 shows labor market employment by industry for the period 1990 to 1999. Manufacturing, mining, agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, finance and real estate are all important sources of outside income in the labor market. Local commercial interests, banks, schools and professionals, such as lawyers and doctors, provide support to those persons employed in the basic sector. However, it is not always feasible to sharply define an activity as basic or supporting, for there may be local consumption as well as exportation to outside markets. For example, department store goods in Norton may be consumed by those who reside beyond the trade area limits and thus may be designated as both basic and supporting. Therefore, it is very important that the primary trade or economic base area be defined prior to further analysis.

Economic Base Area

Obviously, the determination of Norton's economic base area is largely influenced by where the boundary line is located. There are several possible means of defining this area.

The Norton-Wise Labor Market Area, which includes the City of Norton and the County of Wise, has been defined by the Virginia Employment Commission as an economically integrated unit within which workers may readily change jobs without changing their place of residence.

Coal mining has historically been the major basic industrial activity in the Norton-Wise Labor Market Area. While mining remains the chief source of income, there has been a precipitous decline in mining employment in recent years. In 1998, $93.643 million in payroll was distributed among 60 coal mining establishments in the LMA, which is approximately 27.9 percent of the annual payroll circulated in the area. In comparison, throughout the commonwealth of Virginia, over $450 million in payroll for mining establishments was distributed, equaling only 0.5 percent of the annual payroll dispersed in the state.

While this illustrates the continued importance of the mining industry in the LMA, it is a sharp contrast from data of 20 years ago which indicates that 51 percent of the payroll distributed in the LMA came from coal mining establishments.

Employment analyses and forecasts serve two primary purposes: they provide information necessary for population studies which in turn are used for determining space needs for residential areas and community facilities and they aid in estimating commercial and industrial land use requirements.

Employment by Industry - Norton/Wise County LMA

Legend:
- Agr. Services, Forestry, etc.
- Construction
- Transp.& Public Util.
- F,I, and RE
- Government
- Mining
- Manufacturing
- Trade
- Services
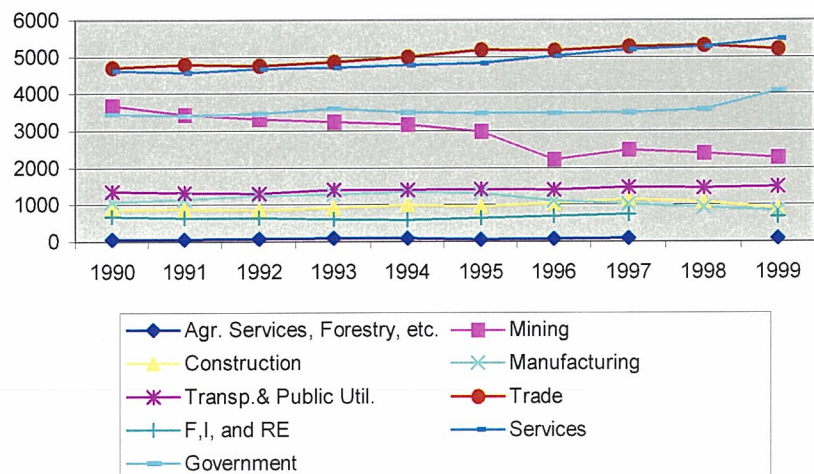
Educational Attainment - City of Norton

4%
7%
3%
17%
23%
19%
27%

- Less than 9th Grade
- 9th - 12th Grade
- HS Grad (or equiv)
- Some College
- Assoc. Degree
- Bachelors Degree
- Grad/Prof Degree
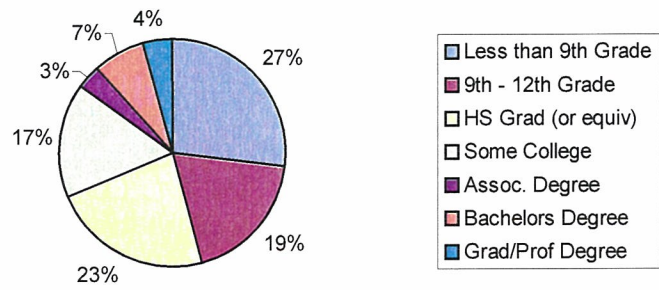
Educational Attainment - Virginia
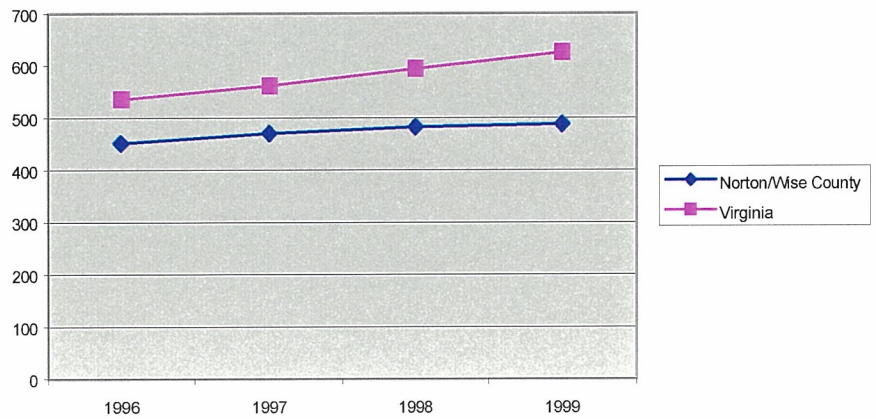
9%
11%
15%
14%
6%
19%
26%

- Less than 9th Grade
- 9th - 12th Grade
- HS Grad (or equiv)
- Some College
- Assoc. Degree
- Bachelors Degree
- Grad/Prof Degree

Average Weekly Wage

- Norton/Wise County
- Virginia

1996   1997   1998   1999

"A city is more than the sum of its inhabitants. It has the power to generate a surplus amenity, which is one reason why people like to live in communities rather than in isolation."

Introduction

As a preamble to the development of the goals, objectives and strategies contained in Chapter VI of this plan, the citizens of Norton developed a <u>*Vision Statement*</u> for the community. Six community vision teams were convened. These teams addressed the six topics of economic development, education, housing, recreation and culture, technology and transportation and infrastructure. Each team was convened to address one of the six topics. They began their work by discussing community needs and values, and concluded their efforts by identifying and a vision of Norton for the year 2020.

The Planning Commission compiled the efforts of each group and developed a single community vision for the year 2020. This vision served as the basis for many of the goals, objectives, and strategies contained in this plan. It is written from the perspective of Norton residents in the year 2020, looking back on the many community changes that have occurred in the first two decades of the 20th century.

A VISION OF NORTON IN 2020

"As citizens of Norton we have seen many positive changes in our community during the first two decades of the 21st century. These changes have resulted from the commitment of our community leaders, our businesses, and our residents, to create and live in a community with the highest quality of life."

Economically, Norton continues to be the commercial, healthcare, and personal and professional service center of the region. Large retail centers at the eastern and western edges of our community contribute significantly to our local fiscal health and provide shopping and employment opportunities for people from throughout the region. Downtown is the center point for our professional and specialty service base. There is a strong demand for retail and office space in downtown. The expansion of existing buildings and the construction of new downtown space have met some of this demand. Parking issues in downtown have been addressed through effective parking management and the incorporation of new parking areas as part of new development. Streetscape enhancements, which started in downtown a quarter of a century ago, continue and have expanded to other commercial areas and to some of our older residential neighborhoods.
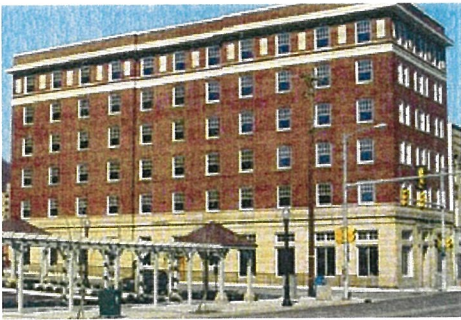
The reopening of the Hotel Norton close to twenty years ago stimulated the resurgence of downtown activity. Businesses within the hotel brought needed employment to the downtown area. The restaurants, and retail and service establishments that opened shortly thereafter continue to meet the needs of downtown employees and people from throughout the region, including students from UVA-Wise and MECC, who have the option of traveling downtown on the daily shuttle between campus and downtown. Many small businesses downtown cater to the needs of students, and thus evolve with the changing interests of these young adults.

Norton's beautiful natural setting and numerous cultural and recreational opportunities contribute significantly to our area's tourism opportunities, and the high quality of life we enjoy. Twenty years ago, a core group of dedicated citizens saw the opportunity for Norton to be a preferred central location for hiking, biking and rock climbing activities. Today, their dedication and vision has been realized. Extensive systems of hiking and biking trails exist in and around Norton. Some of these trails emerged through "rails to trails" initiatives; others were developed in and around Flag Rock and the National Forest. Numerous local businesses benefit from the activities of these "Eco-Tourists." Last year's 16th Annual Norton Triathlon drew hundreds of participants to our community.

Our region benefits from the programming offered by Pro-Art, which continues to expand its offerings and attendance. Last year, over fifty percent of Norton's citizens took part in at least some of Pro-Art's offerings. The new regional cultural arts and civic centers provide quality spaces for these professional offerings and to local groups in need of a space for their activities.

Community festivals have always been popular with Norton citizens. The "Best Friend Festival" continues to be an annual event, and numerous other annual festivals such as "Earth Day" are organized for the benefit of all that attend. These festivals are possible because of the efforts of numerous dedicated volunteers and the financial and staff support of local governments.

Our population has risen slightly in the last twenty years. reversing the declines of the late 20th century. Norton is the "community of choice" in the region, based upon the availability of housing, and the convenient access to high quality services, including education. New housing subdivisions in and adjacent to the city have given people additional choices on where to live. Some of these subdivisions have been the result of public/private partnerships between the city and developers who wish to provide a product that is affordable to the average income family in the region. Cooperation between Norton and Wise County has resulted in the creation of new areas suitable for residential development. Flexibility has been built into our residential development standards, allowing cost-effective development without sacrificing the safety and welfare of our residents.

Investment in our older neighborhoods continues. Through private initiatives, and public grant programs, substandard housing in our community has been eliminated. Our older neighborhoods have been preserved, and enhanced by an expanded sidewalk and trail system that links our neighborhoods to downtown and community recreation areas.

Our population increase has benefited our independent school system that has seen slow but steady increases in enrollment. Young families with children occupy many of the new homes being constructed in our community. This increase in enrollment has been one factor that has allowed us to maintain and improve our educational facilities and historically strong academic programs. We are being successful in creating a generation of life long learners. Our students are competitive. They know how to learn, and understand the value of learning. They are prepared for the workplace and are valued by local employers. College is an option for all of our students.

Our educational and community partnerships with Wise County, MECC and UVA-Wise continue to expand and evolve, bringing enhanced educational opportunities for all of the regions' citizens. Regular meetings between the regions' school superintendents and higher education officials have fostered a sharing of ideas and resources for the benefit of the community.

Norton has stayed "ahead of the curve" in the development and use of technology in the community. Technology is now seen as part of our basic infrastructure, and as essential as water, sewer, or electricity. All of the new homes being constructed in our community have access to today's technological advances allowing our homes to be a place to live, work and be educated. Many of our older homes have been retrofitted to take advantage of today's technological opportunities. Our businesses rely upon this technological access to expand their markets, and compete worldwide.

Our expanded population and fiscal base have allowed us to finance many needed improvements to other elements of our basic infrastructure. Long-standing storm drainage issues have been resolved though the implementation of the storm drainage improvement plan prepared many years ago.

Our sanitary sewer and water systems have also been improved significantly in the past 20 years. Our sewer line replacement program has greatly reduced stormwater infiltration and associated capacity issues at the treatment plant. On-going water line replacement programs now allow us to account for over 85 percent of the water we distribute. Capacity and safety improvements have been made to all of our water impoundments. The full integration of the Norton, Wise and Big Stone Gap water systems has insured that all of our residents will have adequate water supplies throughout the year.

Virginia's improved transportation funding formulas have allowed the full implementation of the Norton 2020 transportation plan prepared in 2002. In addition, other transportation improvements have been completed. These include construction of the Route 74N extension, and the creation of community gateways at the major entrances to our community. Increased federal funding has also resulted in the re-establishment of passenger rail and bus services to the Norton/Wise County area.

Introduction

Norton residents enjoy a high quality of life. One factor contributing to this high quality of life is the community facilities and services offered by Norton to its residents. City Council and Norton's professional staff offers services from a strong business perspective, with a focus on continuous improvement. This section highlights some of the more visible city facilities and services.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Public Safety

Norton's Police, Fire and Rescue and Sheriff departments' provide public safety services to city residents.

The Police Department, currently located at the main city office complex on Virginia Avenue, has approximately fifteen sworn officers who provide a full range of law enforcement and crime prevention services. Norton also employs the services of a paid Fire Chief who oversees the 28 volunteer firefighters and support personnel. Norton's fire station is also located at the main city office complex. The all-volunteer rescue squad is located at the west end of the city. The Sheriff's office is comprised of the city Sheriff and two deputies who provide civil process services and serve as community resource officers at Norton schools.

Norton currently contracts with Wise County for the use of their jail facility. They are also a founding member of the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority, which is currently constructing three regional jails in the Coalfields region

Norton is currently planning for the location and construction of a new public safety building. A site for the new facility has not been chosen, but is likely to be near the downtown area.

Solid Waste

Norton provides solid waste collection and disposal services for all of its residents and commercial businesses. Residential collection occurs once a week. A monthly fee is charged for these services. Collected waste is disposed, by contract at the Blackwood Landfill.

Norton also operates a residential curbside recycling program and recycling drop-off centers. Over 180 homes participate in the curbside service. These recycling programs allow Norton to achieve its state-mandated recycling goals.

Library Services

Norton is a member of the Lonesome Pine Regional Library Board that provides library services to Norton and the larger regional area. The library system is comprised of 11 branches. Although the branches are in different political jurisdictions, the library system has a common goal - to provide all Virginia residents free library services, obtainable with one library card valid at all public libraries in the system. Lonesome Pine Regional Library is headed by the regional library director and governed by an eleven member Board of Trustees.

The libraries are automated and share the same computer catalog. This computer catalog makes available all Lonesome Pine collections from any of the library locations.

Parks and Recreation

The Norton Department of Parks and Recreation provides a wide variety of special events, facilities, and programs for the benefit of Norton area residents. Department offices are located in the Norton Community Center The department operates and maintains the following facilities and parks :

- Flag Rock Recreation Area
- Norton Community Center
- Norton Swimming Pool
- Norton Park (11th Street)
- Locust Avenue Park
- Legion Park
- Clear Creek Park

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Issues and Opportunities

Economic Development is the process of creating wealth in a community. A community's wealth can be in many different forms. For example, the income earned by Norton residents, the employment opportunities available in the city, local business investment in capital, the value of local real estate, and even taxes paid for essential and desired public services, can all be seen as forms of community wealth. Economic development activities in Norton strive to enhance these forms of community wealth.

Norton is the geographic and economic center point of the Coalfields Region. Because Norton's businesses and residents participate in this regional economy, economic development activities in Norton contribute to the economic health in the region, and regional activities benefit Norton businesses and citizens.

The changing regional economy is becoming less reliant on mining as a principal economic activity contributing to the wealth of the community. Norton has adapted to this changing regional economy by adopting and pursuing a varied economic development strategy that emphasizes Norton's assets and role in the region. A varied approach to economic development is the best way to promote a stable, healthy economy and a high quality of life in the community. Norton's economic strategy has focused on downtown development and enhancement, a strong business assistance program, and community wide retail attraction and retention.

Topographic considerations and the lack of large acreage tracts limit Norton's efforts in industrial attraction. Local industrial development emphasis is placed on supporting regional labor force development and training, and insuring local and regional infrastructure capacity, two factors vital to industries looking to expand or locate in the region.

Downtown plays an important role in economic health of the community. It is a professional, service, and governmental destination, drawing people and money into the city. The Hotel Norton is the centerpiece of Norton's recent economic development efforts. This refurbished, historic structure provides high quality space for businesses seeking to locate in a professional environment in the community. Success in marketing the hotel as a prime employment location will result in many positive spin-offs for other retail and service businesses in downtown and the wider community.

Economically, Norton is highly dependent on tax revenues derived from its retail base. Expansion and diversification of the city's tax base will insure that Norton continues to have the revenue stream necessary to provide high quality services.

The enhancement and promotion of Eco-tourism opportunities in and around Norton is another area for economic growth. Norton's natural environment offers numerous opportunities for the development of hiking and biking. Pursuit and development of these opportunities will take a local commitment of resources, and local and regional action and promotion.

Community Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal: To maintain and enhance Norton's economic base.

Objective: Continue to maintain and enhance downtown Norton as the economic center of the community.

Strategy: Continue to promote and market the Hotel Norton as a preferred business location.

Strategy: Continue to evaluate parking availability in the downtown area and explore alternative strategies to ensure sufficient and convenient parking is available for downtown shoppers and employees.

Strategy: Continue to improve downtown infrastructure through planned capital expenditures.

Strategy: Identify and evaluate sites in downtown Norton suitable for redevelopment as more viable economic uses.

Objective: Continue to support the expansion of Norton's retail, service, and small business base.

Strategy: Adopt a future land use map and an official zoning map that designate sufficient land area for future commercial growth.

Strategy: Consider adopting a façade improvement program in commercial areas of Norton, particularly at the west end of the city.

Strategy: Continue to monitor the needs of existing and proposed businesses and provide public incentives, as appropriate, to encourage their location, growth and expansion.

Strategy: Monitor and pursue grant opportunities designed to provide assistance to commercial businesses.

Strategy: Work with local technology providers to ensure that local businesses have access to the broadband technology necessary to compete globally.

Strategy: In partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and local colleges and universities, consider the development of a small business mentoring program and a student business internship program.

Strategy: Promote retail and service opportunities in Norton to attract students from local colleges.

Objective: Participate in, and support, regional economic development activities, and organizations.

Strategy: Continue to participate in, and support the work of, regional economic development organizations such as the LENOWISCO PDC and the Virginia Coalfields Economic Development Authority.
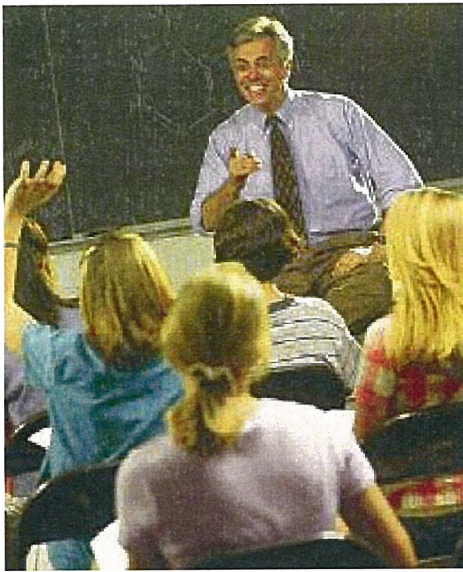
EDUCATION

<u>Issues and Opportunities</u>

As an independent city, Norton operates its own school system for the benefit of its residents. The school system is perceived as high quality by the community, with respect to academic standards, programs, and facilities. Partnerships with the Wise County school system and Mountain Empire Community College enhance the student educational experience. Class sizes are small, allowing more individual attention. As a two-school system with less than 740 students, Norton schools can react quickly and professionally to changing educational requirements and student needs.

Declining enrollments and the availability of local revenues for school operations are two challenges being faced by Norton and many other Virginia independent cities. Future enrollment levels are likely to be affected by Norton's population trends. A continued aging of the population and net population loss are two factors that will negatively affect future enrollments and Norton's ability to continue to fund school operations at a level expected by the community. Local funding available for school operations is, and will be, a function of local service priorities, and the willingness of the community in the future to contribute additional revenue for education.

In the long term, Norton will need to explore many different alternatives to adequately fund and maintain high quality schools. Local tax increases are one alternative. Another alternative to explore must be the consolidation of school services with Wise County. Consolidation of schools can be a highly emotional issue in any community, as schools are the center of community life and community pride.

Any discussions of tax increases for education or school consolidation will require community leadership. The issues must be publicly discussed and debated and community supported strategies must be developed.

<u>Community Goals, Objectives, and Strategies</u>

Goal: To provide the highest quality educational opportunities for all Norton residents.

> **Objective:** Identify and establish priorities for school system capital needs.

> **Strategy:** Continue to use a five year Capital Improvement Plan as a tool to monitor and address the school system's capital needs within the fiscal capacity of the city.

Objective: Enhance cooperative opportunities and programs with other area school systems and local universities.

Strategy: Explore all opportunities for cooperative programs with other area school systems and local universities for the fiscal and educational benefits that can accrue.

Objective: Continue to expand and promote the use of technology as an educational tool in the classroom.

Strategy: Continually monitor the use of technology in educational settings and incorporate the latest technology trends into the school system's educational services and facilities.

Objective: Maintain and improve the school system's strong academic programs.

MUNICIPAL BUILDING

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION AND SERVICES

Issues and Opportunities

Norton is a community characterized by low taxes and a low cost of living. It has a highly professional and open government. City staff and council do an excellent job in managing local issues and resources. As an independent city, Norton has the political and fiscal autonomy to make decisions that are in the best interest of its citizens. Although independent, Norton has historically understood the benefits of regional cooperation and has participated in a variety of regional programs and service initiatives.

Independent cities lack the ability to grow their revenues and tax base through the annexation of developed and developing areas outside their boundaries. As a result, local revenue enhancement must result from growing revenues internally. This system places strong fiscal challenges on independent cities to continue to provide needed and expected services. Some independent cities in Virginia have taken the bold step of evaluating innovative regional cost and revenue sharing arrangements and alternative forms of government as ways to ensure the highest quality services continue to be provided.

Achieving Norton's 2020 Vision will require that local leadership be open to exploring alternative organizational forms and arrangements for providing services.

Community Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal: To provide the highest quality governmental services in a cost-effective manner.

Objective: Evaluate alternative forms of government and creative service arrangements to determine the best way to provide needed and desired government services.

Strategy: Continue to explore, and participate in, regional service agreements that decrease the cost of service provision and enhance the quality of local services.

Strategy: Initiate local discussions and fiscal analysis on long term cost/benefit of Norton's independent city status.
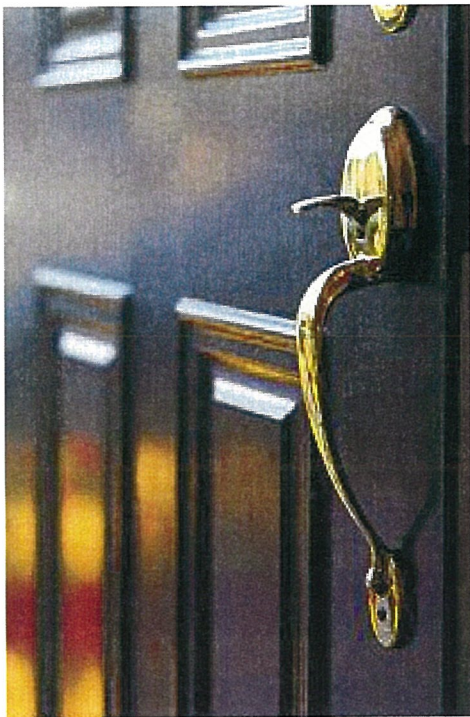
HOUSING

Issues and Opportunities

Norton participates in a regional housing market. A healthy housing market balances the demand and supply of housing, creating opportunities for citizens to reside in affordable housing in their community of choice.

Housing demands in a community are met both by the supply of existing housing, and new units being constructed. The demand for housing in Norton is greater that the housing supply. This is true at all price levels, but especially in the less than $80,000 price range. There is also a high demand for rental housing in the city.

Over the past decade, very little new housing has been constructed in Norton. The lack of new housing starts in Norton can be attributed to many factors including a slow regional growth rate, lack of developable land, the cost of available land, and the overall cost of residential development.

The future availability of new housing in Norton will be one factor affecting Norton's population growth or decline. Local efforts should be encouraged to promote new housing within the city and to ensure the continued viability of the city's existing stock

Community Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal: To enhance the supply and quality of housing in Norton.

Objective: Identify land that is suitable for the construction of new housing.

Strategy: Adopt a future land use map and an official zoning map that designates sufficient land area for future single family and multi-family residential growth.

Strategy: Identify and promote the development of infill housing sites within the city.

Objective: Maintain and enhance the quality of Norton's existing housing stock.

Strategy: Undertake a housing quality assessment to ascertain the existing quality and rehabilitation needs of Norton homes.

Strategy: Enforce property and building maintenance codes using available staff and resources.

Strategy: Continue local program that promotes housing construction by subsidizing the demolition of dilapidated homes.

Strategy: Explore the development of local housing rehabilitation program using funding available from state and federal sources.

Objective: Promote construction of new affordable housing in the community.

Strategy: Continue existing, and look for new opportunities for, public/private partnerships designed to promote the development of affordable housing in the city.

Strategy: Monitor, and when appropriate pursue, state and federal grant opportunities designed to subsidize the cost of housing infrastructure.

Strategy: Evaluate, and modify if necessary, local zoning and subdivision standards that unnecessarily contribute to the cost of housing.

Strategy: Explore the adoption of zoning provisions for cluster and/or zero lot line housing as a strategy to reduce the per unit cost of housing development.

Strategy: Monitor and support General Assembly legislation to allow greater flexibility in VDOT secondary road design standards.

Strategy: Explore the need for special purpose housing opportunities in Norton.

RECREATION, CULTURE AND QUALITY OF LIFE

<u>Issues and Opportunities</u>
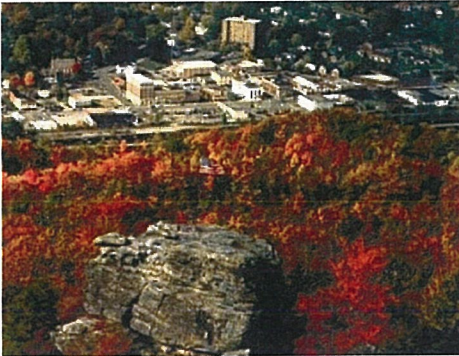
There is a wide array of public and private recreational and cultural opportunities available in Norton and surrounding jurisdictions. The city's public recreational and cultural programs are exceptional given the size and resources of the community. Private organizations and the state and federal government also contribute significantly to the regions recreational and cultural offerings.

Norton's location in a beautiful, mountainous, natural environment is conducive to promoting recreational eco-tourism opportunities. Numerous local and regional opportunities exist to improve outdoor recreational activities such as hiking, biking and climbing.

The development of a long-range master plan for parks and recreation would allow Norton to identify specific recreational and cultural needs and identify and prioritize resources required to address these needs.

<u>Community Goals, Objectives, and Strategies</u>

Goal: To promote recreational and cultural opportunities for all Norton residents

> **Objective:** Support local and regional cultural organizations and activities.
>
>> **Strategy:** Continue to support the activities and programming of regional cultural organizations such as Pro-Art.
>>
>> **Strategy:** Explore and promote marketing and promotional activities designed to increase Norton residents' participation in recreational and cultural offerings.
>
> **Objective:** Explore the feasibility of developing a regional cultural arts center.
>
>> **Strategy:** Initiate/participate in regional discussions evaluating the need for a regional cultural arts center. Explore capital and operating funding options for the center.
>
> **Objective:** Maintain, enhance, and expand community festivals such as the Best Friend Festival.
>
>> **Strategy:** Continue the annual support necessary to plan and hold the Best Friend Festival.

Strategy: Identify and convene volunteers interested in organizing other annual events, festivals and celebrations.

Objective: Continue to promote tourism in the region by marketing Norton area recreational and cultural opportunities.

Strategy: Work with the Chamber of Commerce and other area marketing organizations to promote the region's existing recreational and cultural opportunities.

Objective: Expand outdoor recreation opportunities such as hiking, biking and climbing in and around Norton.

Strategy: Explore the feasibility of initiating a local and regional rails-to-trails program.

Strategy: Identify and convene volunteers interested in trail development and identify a pilot trail development project to be initiated in 2003.

Strategy: Advocate and participate in the development of a regional pathways plan that identifies existing and future hiking, biking and climbing opportunities in the Norton area.

Strategy: Explore the development of additional baseball fields on property north of Norton Community Hospital.

Objective: Develop additional recreational facilities and opportunities in Norton, including opportunities for young adults.

Strategy: Explore expanding recreational opportunities at Flag Rock and the Norton reservoir

Strategy: Explore the feasibility of developing an indoor recreational center including facilities suitable for young adults.

Strategy: Identify possible locations and sources of funding for a local "cyber café."

TECHNOLOGY

Issues and Opportunities

Technology connects people and businesses to the world. Fiber optics, digital services and broadband communications all play an important role in defining a community's quality of life, and the ability of an area to recruit new business ventures. As a small city, in a rural environment, access to technology is limited and expensive in Norton.

To compete effectively, Norton must exercise due diligence to keep on top of the ever-changing technology curve. All opportunities to promote, acquire, and develop technology access in the community must be explored and pursued.

Community Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal: To promote and expand the use of technology for the benefit of Norton residents and businesses.

Objective: Support and promote the expansion of broadband and digital cellular services in the Norton community.

Strategy: Ensure that cable modem service is available as an option for all subscribers.

Strategy: Work cooperatively with local DSL providers to encourage the expansion of DSL in the Norton area.

Strategy: Continue to evaluate and approve new requests for communication towers consistent with local zoning standards and land use objectives.

Objective: Continue to develop and expand Norton's geographic information system.

Strategy: Explore all grant opportunities design to enhance the capabilities of Norton's GIS system.

Strategy: Contribute data, when available, to the continual development of a regional GIS system.

Objective: Continue to provide and expand technology education opportunities within the community.

Strategy: Consider the development of in-house public sector employee technology training program.

Strategy: Encourage and support the school system's provision of technology training for teachers and administrators.

Strategy: Encourage and support the school system's offering of a Web-based course as a requirement for high school graduation.

Objective: Develop "e-government" services for the benefit and convenience of Norton residents.
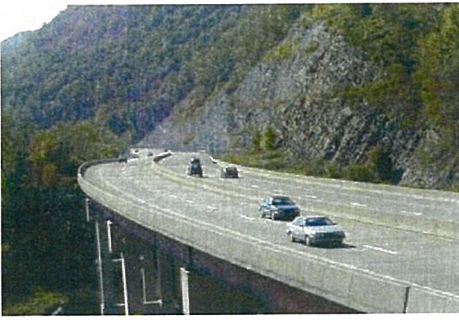
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Issues and Opportunities

Norton enjoys excellent transportation system with access to the larger region via Route Alt 58 and Route 23. These improved routes provide easy access to Tennessee, Kentucky, and other parts of Virginia. Good access is important for the movement of people and the shipment of goods to and from the region. The community's recently adopted long range 2020 Transportation Plan is a good guide for needed future improvements.

Prepared with the assistance of the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Norton 2020 Transportation Plan (incorporated herein by reference) evaluated the existing transportation system in the Norton area and recommended a set of transportation improvements that best satisfied existing and future transportation needs of the community. The plan recommends a three-phase implementation program, highlighting immediate needs, and future needs for the 2010 and 2020 time horizons.

As an older city, Norton's public water, sewer, and drainage infrastructure is aging. Considerable capital funding has been devoted in recent years to ensure that these facilities are properly maintained and enhanced to meet the needs of area residents and businesses.

Norton maintains over 45 miles of sewer transmission lines and over 48 miles of 6" or greater water lines, most of which are located within the city limits. All of the city's sewer lines are gravity flow; thus, the city owns no sewer pump stations. The city has no sewage treatment facilities, but is a founding member of the Coeburn-Norton-Wise Regional Wastewater Authority. The Authority operates a 4.0MGD secondary treatment plant in the Coeburn area and releases treated effluent to the Guest River.

Norton owns two water reservoirs with a combined capacity of over 130 million gallons. The city's treatment, water storage, and distribution system is comprised of a 1.44 million gallons per day water treatment plant, five water tanks with a combined capacity of over 1.8 million gallons, and two water pump stations.

Community Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal: To develop and maintain a highly reliable, safe, efficient, and cost-effective transportation and infrastructure system for Norton.

    Objective: Develop and maintain Norton's public street and highway system.

Strategy: Continue to work cooperatively with the Virginia Department of Transportation to develop and implement long-range transportation plans for the City.

Strategy: Continue Norton's annual street improvement and maintenance program.

Objective: Provide reliable, high quality public water and sewer systems for the Norton community.

Strategy: Continue to appropriate capital funding, as available, to implement Norton's Comprehensive Water Study.

Strategy: Continue to reduce stormwater infiltration problems in the city through capital appropriations to implement the city's sewer improvement plans.

Strategy: Continue to work cooperatively with other area jurisdictions to ensure a public water supply of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the future needs of area residents and businesses.

Strategy: Continue to evaluate and monitor dam safety requirements and make improvements to the impoundment as necessary to ensure the continued long-term integrity of the facility.

Objective: Improve and maintain Norton's storm water management and drainage systems.

Strategy: Continue to appropriate capital funding, as available, to implement Norton's long range drainage improvement plan.

Strategy: Monitor NPDES Phase III compliance schedules for requirements that will affect Norton.

Introduction

EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE MAPS

The following two maps show generalized existing land uses in Norton, and proposed future land uses for the city. Draft existing and future land use maps were prepared for, and reviewed by, the Norton Planning Commission. Norton citizens reviewed and commented on the maps at a community meeting held on October 10th[th], 2002. As a result of these reviews, final land use maps were prepared by the Planning Commission and incorporated into this plan.

Generalized Existing Land Use Map

Land Use information displayed on this map was obtained by conducting a "windshield survey" of the Norton community. The survey was conducted in the Spring of 2002. Data collected from this survey was reviewed by the Planning Commission. As a result of this review, the following eight existing land use categories were selected:

- **Low Density Residential**
  Single family homes are a predominant land use within this category. Included are small lots devoted to single family use, and larger tracts of land that are the location of at least one single family home.

- **Medium-High Density Residential**
  Apartments and townhomes are the primary land use within this category. Areas devoted to this land use are limited within the city.

- **Highway Commercial**
  These areas are generally located at the eastern and western entrances to the city, and to a lesser extent along other major transportation corridors. Highway Commercial areas generally designate the location of the city's major retail shopping areas and include major land uses such as shopping centers, hotels, and highway-oriented restaurants.

- **Downtown Commercial**
  This category designates the location of the city's downtown commercial areas. Offices, professional services, and smaller scale retail uses are the predominant land uses in the downtown area.

CITY OF NORTON
GENERALIZED LAND USE MAP

LEGEND
Low Density Residential
Med.-High Density Residential
Highway Commercial
Downtown Commercial
Industrial
Public/Institutional
Vacant
Jefferson Nat'l Forest
Roads

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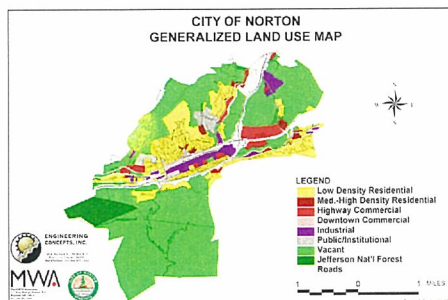
- **Industrial**

  Two major industrial areas are located within the city. One area is located along Hawthorne Road near the northern city limits. The second and larger area is located near downtown between the railroad and Kentucky Avenue.

- **Public/Institutional**

  This category shows the location of larger scale publicly owned properties and the location of the two large medical center complexes within the city.

- **Vacant**

  This category shows the location of vacant parcels or tracts of land that contain no significant land use or assessed structure.

- **Jefferson National Forest**

  This category shows the location of property within the Jefferson National Forest
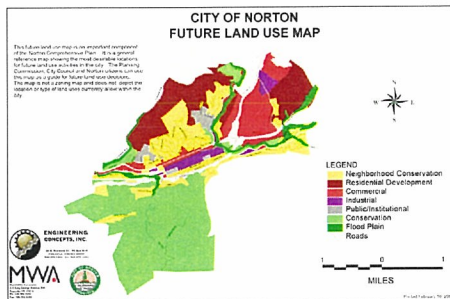
<u>Future Land Use Map</u>

The Future Land Use Map serves as a general guide for the future development of the Norton community. Both public and private sector decision makers may use this map. Local planning commissions and elected officials can use this future land use map as one source of information when planning public facilities, or evaluating land use requests. The map may also serve as a general guide for private investment, indicating the location and type of future desired development.

This map presents a generalized overview of desired land use locations within the city. The map is not intended to be parcel specific. As a generalized map, a mixture of land uses is found in any designation. The specific location of future land uses will be determined by the zoning ordinance, and when required by the zoning ordinance, Commission and Council review of specific land use requests. Such review will consider the compatibility and benefits of the use, and land use impacts of a specific use on the surrounding neighborhood and larger community.

Seven future land use categories are shown on this map. Guidelines for each are as follows:

Neighborhood Conservation
Areas :
- That are currently developed and platted primarily as single family residential subdivision areas,

- That are logical extensions of existing platted residential subdivision areas based upon topography, access and existence of, or potential for, public utilities.

CITY OF NORTON
FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Residential Development

Areas :
- Where most new residential development in the city should occur,

- That have existing or planned road access adequate to accommodate proposed residential densities,

- That have existing or proposed public utilities of sufficient capacity to accommodate future densities,

- That are topographically suitable for residential development without excessive grading for public streets and building sites.

Commercial Development

Areas:
- That are currently used for commercial development,

- That are logical extensions of existing commercial areas based upon existing zoning and surrounding land uses,

- That are topographically suitable for future commercial development,

- Having direct or planned access to a major arterial or collector street,

- That have, or can be served by, public utilities,

- That are, or can be buffered from, surrounding land uses of lesser intensity.

Industrial Development

Areas:
- Where industrial uses have historically developed and exist,

- Where public water and sewer exist or are planned,

- That have adequate vehicular access without directing industrial traffic through residential areas,

- That are topographically suitable for industrial-scale facilities without significant grading.

Public/Institutional

Areas:
- Currently used for large scale public or institutional uses such as parks and recreation areas, schools, or hospitals,

- That have been identified as new or future expansion areas for parks and recreation areas, schools, or hospitals

Conservation Areas

Areas:

- That are owned or managed by the state or federal government as park, recreation or conservation areas,

- That contain valuable and irreplaceable resources, such as public water supply impoundments and watersheds, significant ridgelines, important view sheds, historical and archeological sites and unique natural areas,

- That contain known environmental characteristics that prohibit or severely restrict development,

- That have steep slopes in excess of 30 percent.

Flood Plain

Areas:

- That are within 100-year flood plains.

CITY OF NORTON
GENERALIZED LAND USE MAP
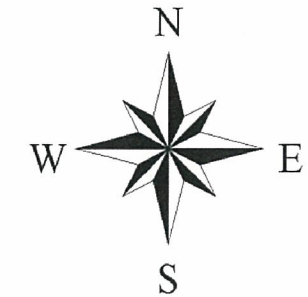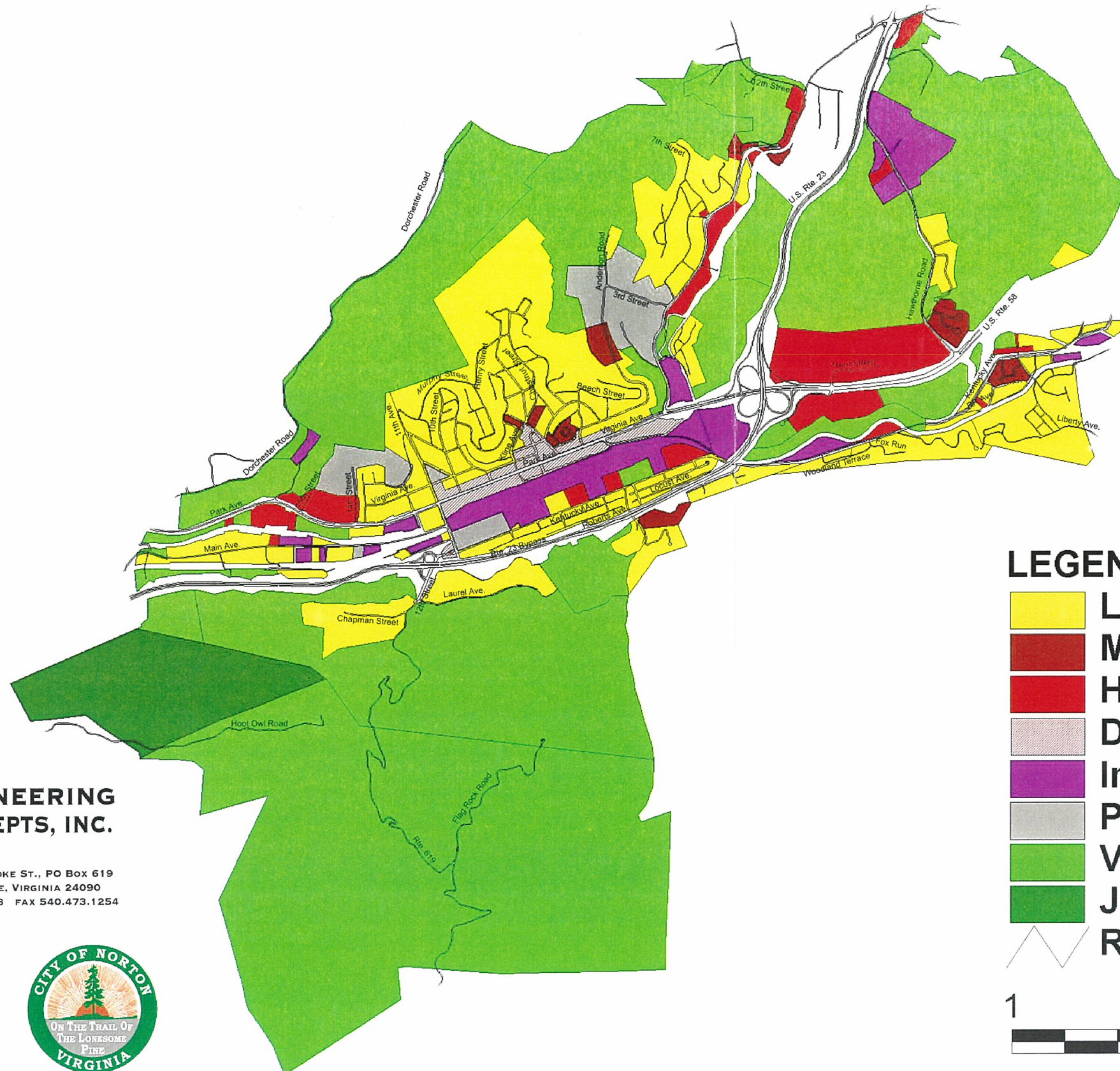
LEGEND

- Low Density Residential
- Med.-High Density Residential
- Highway Commercial
- Downtown Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Vacant
- Jefferson Nat'l Forest
- Roads

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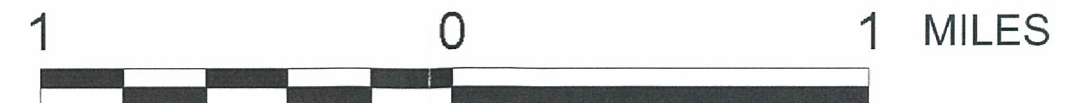
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Roanoke, VA 24016
Ph: 540-982-1444
Fax: 540-982-8300

CITY OF NORTON
ON THE TRAIL OF
THE LONESOME
PINE
VIRGINIA

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CITY OF NORTON
FUTURE LAND USE MAP

This future land use map is an important component
of the Norton Comprehensive Plan. It is a general
reference map showing the most desirable locations
for future land use activities in the city. The Planning
Commission, City Council, and Norton citizens can use
this map as a guide for future land use decisions.
The map is not a zoning map and does not depict the
location or type of land uses currently allowed within the city.

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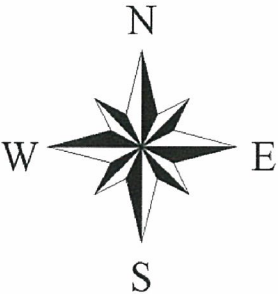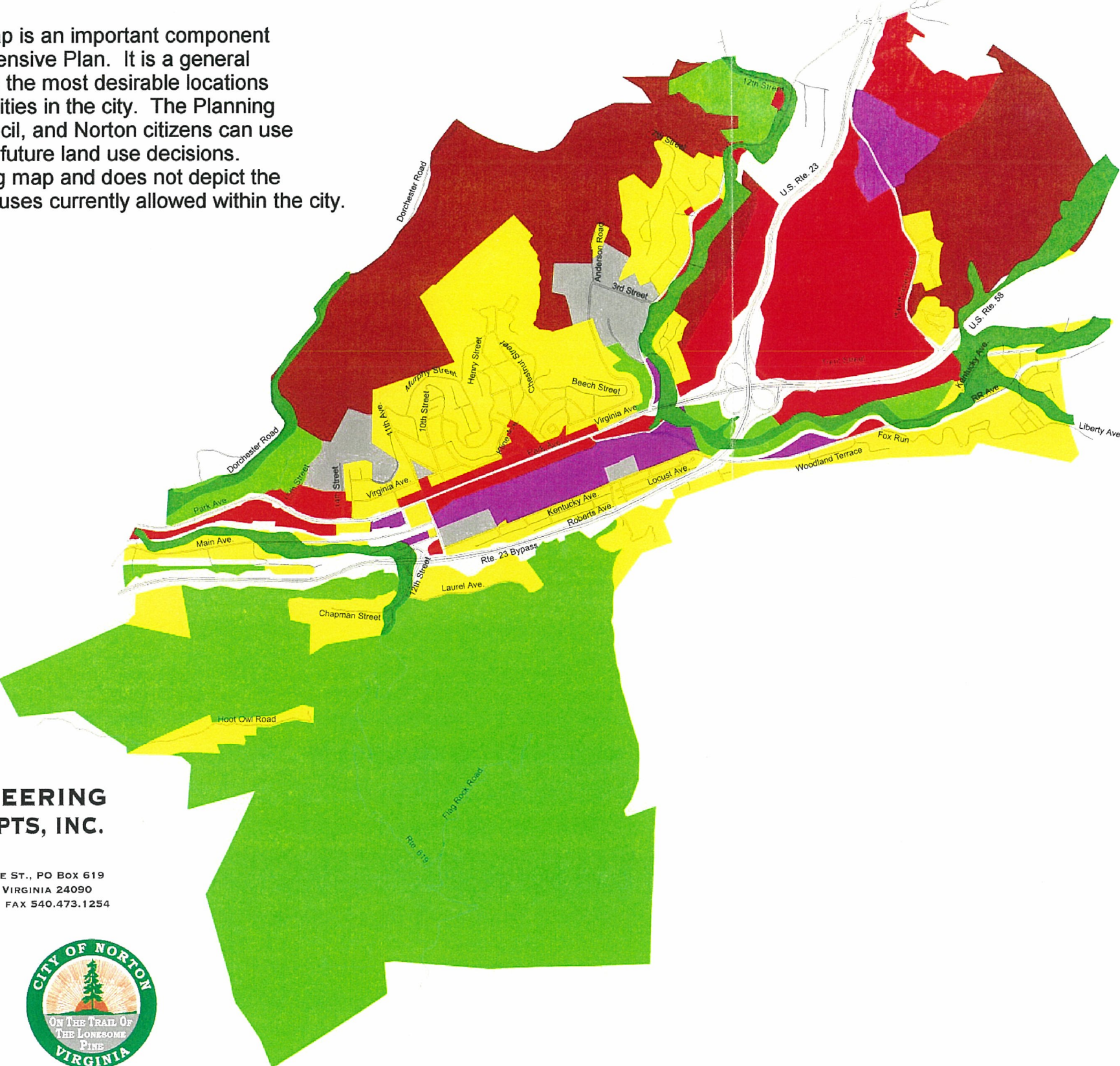
LEGEND

- Neighborhood Conservation
- Residential Development
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Conservation
- Flood Plain
- Roads

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MILES

Printed February 10, 2003

City of Norton, Virginia
Comprehensive Plan
Summary of Action Strategies

Area	Strategy	Primary Responsibility	General Time Frame
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Continue to evaluate parking availability in the downtown area and explore alternative strategies to ensure sufficient and convenient parking is available for downtown shoppers and employees.	City Staff	On-Going
	Continue to improve downtown infrastructure through planned capital expenditures.	City Council City Staff	On-Going
	Identify and evaluate sites in downtown Norton suitable for redevelopment as more viable economic uses.	City Staff	On-Going
	Adopt a future land use map and an official zoning map that designates sufficient land area for future commercial growth.	Planning Comm. City Council	1-2 years
	Consider adopting a façade improvement program in commercial areas of Norton, particularly at the west end of the city.	City Council City Staff	3-5 years
	Continue to monitor the needs of existing and proposed businesses and provide public incentives, as appropriate, to encourage their location, growth and expansion.	City Council City Staff	On-Going
	Monitor and pursue grant opportunities designed to provide assistance to commercial businesses.	City Staff	On-Going
	Work with local technology providers to ensure that local businesses have access to the broadband technology necessary to compete globally.	City Council City Staff	On-Going

City of Norton, Virginia
Comprehensive Plan
Summary of Action Strategies

Area	Strategy	Primary Responsibility	General Time Frame
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT *(continued)*	In partnership, with the Chamber of Commerce and local colleges and universities, consider the development of a small business mentoring program and a student business internship program.	City Staff	3-5 years
	Promote retail and service opportunities in Norton to attract students from local colleges.	Chamber of Commerce	On-Going
	Continue to participate in, and support the work of, regional economic development organizations such as the LENOWISCO PDC and the Virginia Coalfields Economic Development Authority.	City Council City Staff	On-Going

City of Norton, Virginia
Comprehensive Plan
Summary of Action Strategies

Area	Strategy	Primary Responsibility	General Time Frame
EDUCATION	Continue to use a five-year CIP as a tool to monitor and address the school system's capital needs within the fiscal capacity of the city.	School Board	On-Going
	Explore all opportunities for cooperative programs with other area school systems and local universities for the fiscal and educational benefits that can accrue.	School Board	On-Going
	Continually monitor the use of technology in educational settings and incorporate the latest technology trends into the school systems educational services and facilities.	School Board	On-Going

Area	Strategy	Primary Responsibility	General Time Frame
GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION AND SERVICES	Continue to explore, and participate in, regional service agreements that decrease the cost of service provision and enhance the quality of local services.	City Council	On-Going
	Initiate local discussions and fiscal analysis on long term cost/benefit of Norton's independent city status.	City Council	3-5 years

City of Norton, Virginia
Comprehensive Plan
Summary of Action Strategies

Area	Strategy	Primary Responsibility	General Time Frame
HOUSING	Adopt a future land use map and an official zoning map that designates sufficient land area for future single family and multi-family residential growth.	Planning Comm. City Council	1-2 years
	Identify and promote the development of infill housing sites within the city.	City Staff	On-Going
	Undertake a housing quality assessment to ascertain the existing quality and rehabilitation needs of Norton homes.	City Staff	On-Going
	Enforce property and building maintenance codes using available staff and resources.	City Staff	On-Going
	Continue local program that promotes housing construction by subsidizing the demolition of dilapidated homes.	City Council City Staff	On-Going
	Explore the development of local housing rehabilitation program using funding available from state and federal sources.	City Council City Staff	On-Going
	Continue existing, and look for new opportunities for, public/private partnerships designed to promote the development of affordable housing in the city.	City Staff	On-Going
	Monitor, and when appropriate pursue, state and federal grant opportunities designed to subsidize the cost of housing infrastructure.	City Council City Staff	On-Going
	Evaluate, and modify if necessary, local zoning and subdivision standards that unnecessarily contribute to the cost of housing.	Planning Comm. City Council	1-2 years

City of Norton, Virginia
Comprehensive Plan
Summary of Action Strategies

Area	Strategy	Primary Responsibility	General Time Frame
HOUSING *(continued)*	Explore the adoption of zoning provisions for cluster and/or zero lot line housing as a strategy to reduce the per unit cost of housing development.	Planning Comm. City Council	1-2 years
	Monitor and support General Assembly legislation to allow greater flexibility in VDOT secondary road design standards.	City Staff	On-Going
	Explore the need for special purpose housing opportunities in Norton.	City Council City Staff	On-Going

Area	Strategy	Primary Responsibility	General Time Frame
RECREATION, CULTURE AND QUALITY OF LIFE	Continue to support the activities and programming of regional cultural organizations such as Pro-Art.	City Council	On-Going
	Explore and promote marketing and promotional activities designed to increase Norton residents' participation in recreational and cultural offerings.	Chamber of Commerce City Staff	On-Going
	Initiate/participate in regional discussions evaluating the need for a regional cultural arts center. Explore capital and operating funding options for the center.	City Council City Staff	On-Going
	Continue the annual support necessary to plan and hold the Best Friend Festival.	City Council City Staff	On-Going
	Identify and convene volunteers interested in organizing other annual events, festivals, and celebrations.	City Staff	On-Going
	Work with the Chamber of Commerce and other area marketing organizations to promote the regions existing recreational and cultural opportunities.	City Staff	On-Going
	Explore the feasibility of initiating a local and regional rails-to-trails program.	City Staff	2-3 years
	Identify and convene volunteers interested in trail development and identify a pilot trail development project.	City Staff	2-3 years
	Advocate and participate in the development of a regional pathways plan that identifies existing and future hiking, biking and climbing opportunities in the Norton area.	City Council City Staff	2-3 years

Area	Strategy	Primary Responsibility	General Time Frame
RECREATION, CULTURE AND QUALITY OF LIFE *(continued)*	Explore the development of additional baseball fields on property north of Community hospital.	City Staff	On-Going
	Explore expanding recreational opportunities at Flag Rock and the Norton reservoir.	City Council	On-Going
	Explore the feasibility of developing an indoor recreational center including facilities suitable for young adults.	City Council City Staff	On-Going
	Identify possible locations and sources of funding for a local "cyber café."	City Staff	1-2 years

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Area	Strategy	Primary Responsibility	General Time Frame
TECHNOLOGY	Ensure that cable modem service is available as an option for all subscribers.	City Council Local Providers	3-5 years
	Work cooperatively with local DSL providers to encourage the expansion of DSL in the Norton area.	City Council	On-Going
	Continue to evaluate and approve new requests for communication towers consistent with local zoning standards and land use objectives.	Planning Comm. City Council	On-Going
	Explore all grant opportunities design to enhance the capabilities of Norton's GIS system.	City Staff	On-Going
	Contribute data, when available, to the continual development of a regional GIS system.	City Staff	On-Going
	Consider the development of in-house public sector employee technology training program.	City Staff	On-Going
	Encourage and support the school system's provision of technology training for teachers and administrators.	School Board	On-Going
	Encourage and support the school system's offering of a Web-based course as a requirement for high school graduation.	School Board	On-Going

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Area	Strategy	Primary Responsibility	General Time Frame
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	Continue to work cooperatively with the Virginia Department of Transportation to develop and implement long range transportation plans for the City.	City Council Planning Comm.	On-Going
	Continue Norton's annual street improvement and maintenance program.	City Staff	On-Going
	Continue to appropriate capital funding, as available, to implement Norton's Comprehensive Water Study.	City Council	On-Going
	Continue to reduce stormwater infiltration problems in the city through capital appropriations to implement the city's sewer improvement plans.	City Council	On-Going
	Continue to work cooperatively with other area jurisdictions to ensure a public water supply of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the future needs of area residents and businesses.	City Council City Staff	On-Going
	Continue to evaluate and monitor dam safety requirements and make improvements to the impoundment as necessary to ensure the continued long-term integrity of the facility.	City Staff	On-Going
	Continue to appropriate capital funding, as available, to implement Norton's long range drainage improvement plan.	City Council	On-Going
	Monitor NPDES Phase III compliance schedules for requirements that will affect Norton.	City Staff	On-Going